DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 728 UD 032 381

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TITLE	Part-Time Work and the High School Student: Costs, Benefits and Future. A Review of the Literature and Research Needs.
INSTITUTION	Ontario Inst. for Studies in Education, Toronto. Dept. of Educational Administration.
SPONS AGENCY	Employment and Immigration Canada, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE	1994-10-26
NOTE	30p.
CONTRACT	1C836
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Cost Effectiveness; Foreign Countries; *High School Students; High Schools; Literature Reviews; *Part Time Employment; *Student Employment; *Working Hours; Youth Employment
IDENTIFIERS	Canada; United States

ABSTRACT

This report assesses the literature on part-time work by high school students, describing the various types of studies that have been undertaken on this topic over the last 20 years. Most of the studies reviewed are from the United States or Canada, although a few are from the United Kingdom or Australia. Earlier studies were more likely to be concerned with the effects of part-time work on the employability of youth, but in the late 1980s analysts became more concerned with the negative effects of part-time work on students. In the United States and Canada, about two-third of high school students in the upper grades hold part-time jobs varying from a few hours to more than 30 hours a week. Studies of the effects of part-time work generally deal with academic performance, persistence in school, and other variable related to student activities that may affect their working careers. The literature review includes studies that have been used to bring about modifications of laws and regulations governing youth employment in a number of jurisdictions. The research studies reviewed suggest the following five hypotheses: (1) regulation of part-time work by students in any province in Canada is no more restrictive than the law for hours of work for employees in general; (2) if the hours of work per week are restricted for students, few students will work more than the maximum set by regulations; (3) if restrictions are set on the hours a student may work, more students will work, including students from "at-risk" groups; (4) if restrictions are placed on the number of hours a student may work each week, average marks of students will increase, but absentee and dropout rates will decrease, all other things being equal; and (5) some students, if not allowed to work longer hours, will dropout out of school or apply for part-time status. The evidence is strong enough to justify a large-scale study of these hypotheses. If the relationships among these hypotheses are verified, the Canadian economy will benefit. (Contains 1 table and 66 references.) (SLD)

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PART-TIME WORK AND THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT: COSTS, BENEFITS AND FUTURE

A Review of the Literature and Research Needs

by

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October 26, 1994

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Research on which this report is based was funded under Contract #1C836 with the Government of Canada for the Innovations Program, Employment and Immigration Canada.

UD032381

PART-TIME WORK AND THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT: COSTS, BENEFITS AND FUTURE

A Review of the Literature and Research Needs

Stephen B. Lawton

This report assesses the literature on the topic of part-time work by high school students, describing the various types of studies that have been undertaken on the topic over the last twenty years, the conclusions they have reached, and the need for further research. Almost all studies reviewed were conducted in Canada or the United States, although a few from the United Kingdom and Australia are noted. In some ways, the relevant literature is "time bound". That is, the focus of a given study often reflects the concerns current at the time the study was done rather than a commitment to establishing fundamental relationships that are independent of particular circumstances.

To begin, then, a brief review of the immediate rationales for studying the issue of part-time work by high school students is provided. Subsequently, a descriptions of the trends in part-time work by students in the U.S. and Canada is given, followed by a recounting of the positive and negative effects that part-time work may have. A meta-analysis of empirical findings is provided that reports the direction of several key relationships such as that between the number of hours worked each week and high school academic performance. A brief summary of government actions to control part-time work by students presents examples of both regulations meant to reduce the number of hours student work and programs meant to assist students in learning how to find and hold part-time and permanent jobs. Finally, questions raised but not answered in the literature are identified and several possible studies are proposed that would answer these questions and address important policy issues.

Underlying Rationale for Addressing the Issue

The reasons for being concerned with the issue of part-time work carried out by high school students has varied considerably over the past two decades. Currently, many

believe that extensive part-time work by students hinders their academic achievement and, hence, the long-term development of human resources. This possibility was not the concern in the mid-1970s, the early 1980s, or the late 1980s, periods in which different issues related to part-time work were raised.

The first round of studies on the topic, in the 1970s, developed from concerns about the employability of youth at a time when the number of youth leaving high school was at its peak. The Baby Boom, which was especially pronounced in North America, was flooding the labour market with new members, even as women were increasing their participation rate in the labour market. Critics suggested that the lack of job preparation in the traditional high school curriculum handicapped youth as they moved from school to work. A possible solution posited was encouragement of part-time work and/or co-op education to provide youth with marketable skills. Concerns about youth employment were not limited to North America, but were evident as well in Europe--including Germany with its more vocationally oriented secondary stream--where anxiety about a "lost generation" was evident. As it turned out, North America had an exceptionally good record for creating jobs during the 1970s, even though the "quality" of many of these jobs, as measured by their average pay, was low.

The second round of studies coincided with the severe recession of 1981-1982. At this time, the high and increasing youth unemployment rate was a focus of concern. Analysts drew a connection between dropout rates and unemployment, suggesting that schools were failing both to retain students until graduation and to provide them the skills and knowledge necessary for successful participation in the labour market. Part-time work by students was viewed more ambivalently than before; concern was expressed about its possible negative effects that could offset its positive effects.

In the late 1980s, during which the economy boomed, more analysts became concerned about the negative effects of part-time work by high school students. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of 15 to 19 year-olds in Canada dropped from 2.3 million to 1.8 million (Sunter, 1992), creating a youth labour shortage in some areas. Critics suggested that students who chose to work part-time often were lured into lives of instant gratification and consumerism. Busy at work, adolescents were seen to lack time for reflection that is necessary for them to develop the psychological and emotional maturity needed to ensure that current pleasures did not come at the expense of a sound future. Pseudo-adults, rather

than fully mature individuals, would result as the economy, short of workers, drew many youth into full-time jobs, curtailing their commitment to school. The allegory of Pleasure Island in the tale of *Pinocchio*, with its premature introduction to adult vices and the conversion of youth to jack-asses toiling in the salt mines, seemed to have basis in fact.

Even while this discourse about the wisdom of part-time work by students was taking place, the actual trend was unmistakable: increasing numbers of students were working part-time. This trend is better documented in the U.S. than the Canadian literature, but in both nations the trend was clear. As a result, questions arose as to whether steps should be taken to change the trend, to minimize any negative effect it may have, and to increase possible positive effects that may be derived.

Extent of Part-time Work by High School Students

In the senior grades, data indicate that about two-thirds of all high school students hold part-time jobs entailing work ranging from a few hours to more than thirty hours per week. Males are somewhat more likely to work than females; whites somewhat more likely than non-whites; and middle (lower, middle, and upper) more likely to work than those from the lowest or highest classes.

The exact percentage of students who work, and the numbers of hours worked per week, vary with the economic situation both locally and nationally. In late 1994, near the end of a bad recession, student employment, both in terms of the numbers who work and the number of hours worked, is probably down from the peak during the economic boom period of the late 1980s. Similarly, student employment is probably higher in urban and suburban areas than in rural areas. A few studies in the U.S. indicate that students in inner-city areas are less like to work than those in suburban settings, but this may be explained as much by socio-economic and racial factors as location, so the generalizability of this finding to Canada is uncertain.

The most-cited work on the topic of part-time work by high school students is *When Teenagers Work* by Greenberger and Steinberg (1986). In it the authors describe a post-war trend of increased part-time work by teenagers. Although the authors believe that the methodology used by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) consistently underestimates the actual percentages of students who work, they believe the magnitude of

the trends BLS reported is accurate: a 65 percentage increase (from 27% to 44%) in the percentage of boys working between 1947 and 1980, and a 240 percentage increase (from 17% to 41%) in the percentage of girls working . They believe the High School and Beyond Survey (Peng *et al.*, 1981) provides a more accurate indication of the actual percentage of students working in 1980: 42 per cent of sophomores and 62 per cent of seniors (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986, p. 19). On average, an additional 15 per cent of sophomores and 10 per cent of seniors were also looking for work, and thus considered in the labour market.

Greenberger and Steinberg, referencing Reubens, Harrison and Rupp (1981), state that in 1978-79 "when over two-thirds of all American sixteen- and seventeen-year-old students were in the labor force, the comparable figure in Canada was about 37 percent; in Sweden, only about 20 per cent; and in Japan, less than 2 percent" (pp. 22-23). Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, using methods similar to those of the BLS in the U.S., indicate the rate of employment for students aged 17 to 19 increased from 37% to 44% between 1980 and 1990, a increase of 19%. For students aged 15 to 24, employment rates in 1990 varied from a high of 45% in Ontario and Manitoba, with Alberta and British Columbia slightly less, to a low of 15% in Newfoundland. Other provinces were in the 25% to 35% range (Sunter, 1992). The rates were slightly higher for secondary students aged 17 to 19, with 46% of men and 50% of women working. However, studies based on samples within Ontario suggest still higher figures for that province.

King, *et al.* (1988) surveyed 4,620 students in a sample of 13 Ontario high schools and found the following percentages of working students in three upper grades: 57% in grade 11; 67% in grade 12; and 71% in grade 13. Overall, 63% held jobs (64% for males and 62% for females). A 1978 survey of 29,201 students in the Toronto Board of Education (Larter, *et al.*, 1978) reported that 45% of all students in Levels 1 through 6 (grades 9 to 13) reported having held jobs during the school year (51% for males and 39% for females; for Levels 4 through 6 the average was 47%). A 1975 study in rural Grey County, Ontario (Feenstra, *et al.*, 1975) reported that of 4,337 students, 49% held jobs (56% of males and 41% of females); many of these were farm jobs. In Ontario, at least, the data suggest that part-time work by high school students increased by about one-third between 1975 and 1987 and that, by grade 12, the percentages working and in the labour force match U.S. statistics.

The intensiveness of work (i.e., hours per week) in Ontario also appears similar to that in the U.S. where, in 1980, "the average sophomore [grade 10] boy with a job spends 14.8 hours working each week; the average sophomore girl, 10.5. Comparable figures for senior [grade 12] boys and girls are 21.1 and 17.8 hours per week, respectively" (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1988, p. 21). King, *et al.* (1988, p. 34) report, "Two-thirds of the boys work 16 hours or more; 45 percent work 21 hours or more. Girls work slightly fewer hours than boys, but still over 60 percent work 16 hours or more a week." In Grey County, Feentsra, *et al.* (1975) reported males worked 16 to 18 hours per week and females 13 to 15 hours. Sunter (1992) reported 26% of all employed secondary students aged 17 to 19 in Canada work more than 20 hours per week, with long hours more common among men (31%) than women (20%)

Possible Effects of Part-time Work

Our primary interest is the relationship that part-time work has with a student's academic performance and persistence in school. More broadly, we are asking the questions, what are the effects of part-time work on students and their lives? This is an open ended question that implies that that there are independent effects of working that one can discern--things that occur that otherwise would not have occurred. As well, when relationships are observed, it is a matter of inference to conclude that correlations (usually supplemented by other data) imply causal effects. Not all would agree with this positivist mode of inquiry, but it is the approach taken in the literature and adopted for this study.

Since the possible effects of part-time work are, literally, uncountable, the field of view has been restricted to three general categories: 1) academic performance; 2) persistence in school; and 3) other variables related to student activities in the home or school that may affect their working careers.

Part-time Work and High School Marks

It seems only common sense that if students are working for pay rather than doing their homework, then their marks in school will suffer. This common sense conclusion has been surprisingly hard to demonstrate. King *et al.*'s (1988, p. 33) findings for Advanced level students are typical; marks for non-working students averaged 75.5; for those working 1 to 5 hours, 75.7; 6-10 hours, 76.0; 11-15 hours, 75.0; 16 to 20 hours, 73.8;

21-25 hours, 73.4; 26 to 30 hours, 72.5; and 31 or more hours, 73.0. That is, the average marks for students who do not work are lower than those of students who work a few hours a week. However, those who work more than a threshold level (which varies from study to study, but is usually between 15 and 20 hours per week) have somewhat lower marks than either of the other groups.

Table 1 displays the direction of relationships between part-time work and the academic achievement of high school students reported in twenty studies carried out over the past fifteen years. Also noted are the year of each study, characteristics of the research design (e.g., cross-sectional or longitudinal, sample size, population sampled), and specific independent and dependent variables used. Earlier studies tended to use work/no work as a dichotomous independent variable, whereas more recent studies have included measures of the extent of work (e.g., hours per week) and, on occasion, the timing of the work (weekday evening or weekend). On the dependent side, grade point average (annual, succeeding year's, cumulative, and self-reported) is the most common variable, although several studies have used standardized test scores (e.g., Scholastic Aptitude Test [SAT]).

Overall, twenty-five relationships between part-time work and academic achievement were reported, since several studies reported more than one relationship. Of these, two indicated a positive relationship (i.e., part-time high school workers had higher marks than non-workers), eight no relationship, thirteen a negative relationship, and three a curvilinear relationship. The type of relationship detected will depend a great deal upon the nature of the sample selected and the mode of analysis. Most of the studies compared group means or estimated first-order linear relationships, so curvilinear trends normally would not be identified. In particular, the tendency described earlier (i.e., for students who work a moderate amount of time to have higher marks than those who do not work at all and those who work a large amount) would go undetected. As well, if a particular sample had few or no students who worked over 15 or 20 hours per week, then a positive relationship would be apparent in the data since non-workers have lower marks on average than do workers. In contrast, if a study had relatively few who did not work and many who worked more than 15 or 20 hours per week, then a negative relationship would appear since intensive workers have, on average, lower marks than those working a moderate amount.

For working students, the evidence suggests that there is a negative relationship between the extent of part-time work and student marks. Estimates of the magnitude of this

relationship are not detailed in Table 1 since the requisite data for estimating the effect size were generally lacking. Where data were present, the effect seemed to be on the order of one-quarter to one-third of a mark (e.g., a GPA of 3.2 rather than 3.5 on a 4-point scale, or a 70% rather than a 73%).

A key question is whether or not the observed relationship is one of cause and effect; that is, will increasing amounts of part-time work cause a student's marks to fall? Or, is the opposite true: do lower marks cause some high school students to work more as they increasingly come to see the workplace as an alternative to school as the focus for their lives?

Two studies (Mortimer & Finch, 1986, and Steinberg *et al.*, 1982) sought to test the "selection hypothesis"; that is, that students with declining marks selected themselves into an extensive commitment to part-time work. The first study concluded that selection did take place; the second study concluded that it did not. Schill, McCartin and Meyer (1985) provide some evidence that the socio-economic status (as well as marks) of those working longer hours is somewhat lower than those working moderate number of hours, suggesting 1) that the key selection question is not whether one does or does not work, but how many hours one decides to work and 2) that students of lower socio-economic status (SES) are more likely to work longer hours than are those from middle SES. Even then, the observed fall off in marks may be caused by the longer hours that students work rather than their SES *per se*, so even this "confirmation" of the selection hypothesis is ambiguous.

Related to the selection issue is the question of the perspective one takes of student workers. Are some adolescents, in fact, worker students rather than student workers? That is, having decided to work, are some youth continuing in school "on the side"? Viewed in this perspective, much of the increase in school retention rates, from about 50% in 1950 to 75% today, may reflect a choice by many who might otherwise have become full-time workers to remain in school. They may have "selected" themselves into school, not vice versa. Meyer (1987) speaks of a "progressive attachment to the work force" as students, starting in grade 8 or 9, begin working, first a few hours and then many. Early part-time work is one of many factors which may play a role in the marginalization of high school students (Lawton *et al.*, 1988). Some adolescents may begin to "belong" at work much better than they "belong" at school; as marginalization proceeds, they shift their commitment from school to work, enrolling in fewer, less demanding courses in order to

ease their academic burden (e.g., King *et al.*, 1988). Some students, of course, may see that excessive part-time work is having a negative effect on their studies, and cut back on work in order to emphasize school more (e.g., Feenstra, *et al.*, 1975).

Although the case against excessive part-time work seems solid, some authors (e.g., Barton, 1989; King, *et al.*, 1988), emphasize the negligible effect that part-time work may have on academic achievement and conclude, essentially, that part-time work does not matter. The fact that students who work part-time while still in school seem to obtain jobs more quickly and retain them longer after leaving school than do non-working students (Charner & Fraser, 1987) seems to carry more weight with those who place a very high value upon a smooth transition from school to work. These writers seem to place most value on the vocational, rather than liberal, ends to education and thus discount the negative impact of part-time work. Writers concerned about the possible negative effects of part-time work are more likely to emphasize that opportunities are lost and personal growth is curtailed as a result of a premature assumption of adult roles by adolescents. These competing philosophies concerning the role of work in personal, social and economic development are not discussed explicitly in the literature cited, but the gap between the school and workplace is so great for most adolescents that both the practical and theoretical links between the two need to be clarified.

Part-time Work and Dropping Out

Few of the studies concerned with part-time work by high school students address the question as to whether or not part-time work may lead to a student's dropping out of school. According to Greenberger and Steinberg (1986),

> In the one study we know of that addresses this issue, based on data from the National Longitudinal Surveys, D'Amico (1984) found that intensive employment during tenth and eleventh grades was associated with an increased probability of dropping out of school for certain subgroups of students. Specifically, as the percentage of weeks in which they worked more than twenty hours rose, tenth-grade white males and eleventh-grade white females showed greater vulnerability to leaving school. However, less intensive employment was linked with greater educational perseverance for some youngsters. As the percentage of weeks in which they worked one to twenty hours increased, whites of both sexes and black

> females in grade 11 showed a lower propensity to drop out. A similar but statistically nonsignificant pattern of findings emerged at grade 10. In these analyses, earlier-measured educational expectations were controlled, so that the effects of more and less intensive work experience could be more clearly evaluated (p. 152).

King *et al.* (1988, p. 35) report that the more hours students work the [illegible] they think of dropping out. Twenty-nine percent of those working 10 hours or less thought of leaving school; 38% of those working from 11 to 20 hours considered it, as did 44% of those working from 21 to 25 hours, and 59% of those working 26 hours or more. The option of leaving school was entertained more by students in general level courses (54%) than those in advanced level courses (33%). Yet King *et al.* conclude, "It is probably safe to say that employment opportunities have little bearing on whether students will leave school for work. Although the current economic conditions have created a large number of low paying jobs, these employment opportunities appear to exert little influence on school leaving" (p. 36). This conclusion does not seem to be entirely consistent with the data they report on jobs occupied by youth before and after dropping out of school. The six most common occupations before and after leaving school were: retail store, 16% before vs. 13% after; fast food, 13% vs. 10%; supermarket, 10% vs. 6%; gas station, 10% vs. 8%; restaurant, 10% vs. 11%; and recreation program, 5% vs. 1%. The one category to increase significantly was factory worker, from 2% before to 11% after dropping out. Percentages for each category after dropping out have been adjusted to remove "unemployed", which was listed as 8% for "first job" after dropping out, and 34% for "current job" (pp. 21 and 28), implying that many students who were employed when first leaving school soon move into the ranks of the unemployed. The 1991 *School Leavers Survey* of Statistics Canada confirmed that work is either preferred to school (27%) or is a necessity (10%) for many dropouts.

An indirect method of linking part-time work to the decision to drop out is to assess its relationship to known correlates of high school dropout rates, such as absenteeism (Lawton, *et al.*, 1988, p. ix). Several authors report a positive relationship between hours of part-time work and days absent from school. Lillydahl (1990, p. 13) reports that those who were absent 2 or fewer days the preceding month worked an average of 11.4 hours per week; those absent between 3 and 10 days worked an average of 15.5 hours per week; and those absent more than 10 days worked an average of 17.8 hours per week. Barton

(1989, p. 9) notes that, "The percent of students absent for five or more days in the [preceding] month ... was higher for those working more than 25 hours per week than for those who worked less or not at all." Greenberger and Steinberg confirm the relationship. It is probably impossible to prove that part-time work is the cause of increasing absenteeism, but both higher absenteeism and more commitment to work are important elements of a pattern of behaviour that is associated with the weakening of the ties between student and the school--part of the process of marginalization that leads to a student's decision to drop out of school.

Relationship of Part-time Work to Non-Academic Variables

Numerous studies have addressed the relationship of part-time work to a host of non-academic variables including 1) the number of extra-curricular activities at school, 2) family structure and interpersonal relationships with family members, 3) youth delinquency, 4) youth attitudes, skills, and knowledge about work, 5) future employment prospects, and a 6) number of other matters that will not be dealt with here, such as the reasons youth work and the purposes to which they put their earnings.

As would be expected, working part-time means less time for many other activities, including extracurricular activities, time with family, reading, hobbies, socializing with friends and non-school sports (King *et al.*, 1988, p. 33; King, 1986, p. 79). Family schedules are often disrupted by working youth, as parents must transport youth to jobs and reschedule family vacations (Phillips & Sandstrom, 1990; Manning, 1990). Greenberger and Steinberg (1986), Steinberg *et al.* (1993), and Mortimer *et al.* (1993) link the growing psychological and social distance between the youth and the family to a decline in parent supervision and youth's exposure to "adult vices", including smoking cigarettes, using soft drugs and alcohol, etc. Far from from becoming a part of the adult world, however, youth develop a pseudo-adulthood, they suggest, because they experience working environments that are as age-segregated as the schools they attend.

At the same time, certain family and personal characteristics (e.g., family income, number of parents at home, race, gender, etc.) may condition one's work experience. Children of very low or very high income families are least likely to work, those from single-parent homes are more likely to work longer hours, members of visible minorities tend to work less or find no work at all, and young men and women tend to be employed in different

types of work--young women in clerical and retail positions, and young men in service stations and manual labour (Lillydahl, 1990; Schill, McCartin & Meyer, 1985; Charner & Fraser, 1987).

Youth do learn at the part-time jobs they occupy, but what they learn is not always the virtuous habits of reliability, punctuality, and responsibility that their parents and community expect (Phillips & Sandstrom, 1990). Instead, they may learn how to cheat, to steal, and how to deal with boring and meaningless work (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986; Bachman & Schulenber, 1993). King *et al.* (1988) offer a more positive perspective, reporting that "many low-achieving students obtain more personal satisfaction from their part-time work than they do from school. This not only relates to recognition they get for acting responsibly in carrying out the part-time job, but also for the relationships they establish there. Meeting people is the thing students say they like most about their job. The second favourite is the money they earn and third, the work atmosphere.... However, there are things about part-time work that are not as satisfying: working conditions, unpleasant relationships, and hours they are scheduled to work" (p. 34).

In spite of potential negative effects of working part-time, one positive result that has been repeatedly demonstrate is that youth who work during high school are more likely to find jobs after leaving school, and to receive higher pay than those who have not worked previously (Charner & Fraser, 1987; Stern, McMillion, Hopkins, & Stone, 1990). As well, at the postsecondary level, it has been demonstrate that students who have part-time jobs related to their program of study are more likely to remain in school to complete their degree (Free, 1985). However, as Greenberger and Steinberg (1980) note, these positive effects are to be had with a moderate amount of work; excessive hours of work provide extra financial benefit--but not further development of skills and knowledge--at a cost of increased absence from school, lower marks, and inadequate schooling.

Influencing Part-time Work by Students

Practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers have suggested and initiated a number of steps that either address the potential harm that may excessive part-time work by students may cause or that capitalize upon the positive effects it may have. These actions seem to fall into two major categories, intervention programs and development of regulations.

Intervention Programs

Recognizing the potential positive effects that working at a job may produce, particularly for those who find it difficult to locate employment, educators have developed an array of intervention programs, such a work-experience and co-op education. Evaluations of these programs suggest they may not be as effective at enhancing future employability of youth as is experience in "natural jobs" (Stern *et al.*, 1990; Crysdale & MacKay, 1980; Levinson & Felderbaum, 1993).

In Ontario during the 1970s, Crysdale and MacKay (1980) carried out one of the most extensive intervention programs described in the literature. In the project, 313 students who graduated between 1967 and 1969 from a downtown elementary school were matched on a mobility potential scale and assigned at random to experimental and control groups. The experimental group was given an instructional program involving tutoring, supervised and paid part-time jobs, counselling, a drop-in centre, and recreational and cultural activities. Unfortunately, the instructional program did not increase the overall school completion rate, although "the completion rates for some subsamples (girls, youth from poorest homes, with highest IQs, of non-British origin) were higher than their control matches". The program also helped these same groups in terms of the levels of their first full-time jobs and the smoothness of the youths' passage from school to work. Yet, by 1978, no measurable differences in educational or occupational attainment was detected between the control and experimental groups, although again some sub-groups (youth from low income backgrounds and disadvantaged youth from British backgrounds) appear to have benefitted.

Stern, *et al.* (1990) note shortcomings in the evaluation of co-op programs: "the statistical research on co-op has generally ignored variation in the quality of co-op jobs.... Determining whether co-op or other school-supervised jobs provide more of the features that contribute to students' long-run development that students can find in non-school-supervised jobs is important for measuring more accurately the economic and educational benefits of school based programs" (p. 383).

On occasion, attempts to introduce work-experience and co-op programs have, ironically, run afoul of students who are already too busy at part-time jobs. In several cases, schools have tried to place students into unpaid or low-paid positions in businesses where the

students were already employed! (New York City Board of Education, 1990; Howieson, 1989). When such incidents occur, there is clearly a lack of communication between school systems, students, and the private sector. Given the difficulty of finding placements and the large number of natural jobs held by students, Howieson (1989) suggests "that the use of students' own part-time jobs could help to achieve work experience for all students". This notion is developed further by Simon, Dippo, and Schenke (1991) in *Learning Work*, a manual meant to assist teachers in helping youth to better understand their job situations. Edward Rensi, the president of McDonald's USA, expressed the view that part-time employment complements a high school education (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1993). To date, however, there appears to be no literature that describes and evaluates the use of natural job settings for teaching youth about the various facets of work.

Regulation

Research to date has brought about modification of laws and regulations governing youth employment in a number of jurisdictions. One of the more widely cited are changes proposed in the *Final Recommendations of the* [Wisconsin] *State Superintendent's Task Force on Youth Employment* (1990). These regulations were passed by the state legislature, vetoed by the governor, and are pending as administrative rules. They would:

- Require that minors 16 years of age and older not be employed or permitted to work (except in domestic service or farm labor):

(1) more than 4 hours on a school day nor more than 26 hours in a week or 32 hours when school is in session less than 5 days per week;
(2) before 7:00 a.m. or after 11:00 p.m. before a school day;
(3) more than 8 hours on a nonschool day or 50 hours in a week in which there are no school days;
(4) before 5:00 a.m. on a nonschool night or after 12:30 p.m. before a nonschool night.

Specify, that if a minor 16 or over works more than 40 hours in a week or 10 hours in a day, that minor will be paid one and on-half times the minor's regular wage rate for those hours.

• Require that minors under 16 years of age not be employed or permitted to work (except in domestic service or farm labor):

(1) more than 4 hours on a school day nor more than 18 hours in a week or 24 hours when school is in session less than 5 days per week;
(2) before 7:00 a.m. or after 8:00 p.m. before a school day;
(3) more than 8 hours on a nonschool day or 40 hours in a week in which there are no school days;
(4) before 7:00 a.m. on a nonschool night or after 11:00 p.m. before a nonschool night.

• Create provisions that would allow a minor's work permit to be revoked if requested in writing by the school principal or the minor's parent or legal guardian. The requesting party must demonstrate that some attempt has taken place to resolve the work problem between the minor, school, parent or guardian and employer before the request for revocation is made to the department.

These regulations were based upon the research literature reviewed earlier that revealed a relationship between the number of hours worked and school performance. The restriction of those aged 16 to 18 to a maximum or 26 hours of work per week during the school year, and of those under 16 year of age to 18 hours per week, reflects the view that moderate amounts of work are not harmful (although are relatively high definition of "moderate" has been used). Concern about the effects of working too late on school nights are also evident in the regulations. Along with empowering the school to revoke work permits, these limits of part-time work by students indicate a willingness of Wisconsin to protect the investment in youth that it is making by funding public schools.

By way of contrast, Ontario's *Employment Standards Act* (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 1991) sets a maximum work week of 48 hours for all workers over 14 years of age (those younger require work permits), but sets two tiers of wages: $5.55 hour for students under age 18 working less than 28 hours per week; if they work more, then they must be paid $6.00 per hour. While meant to serve equity and perhaps discourage employers from employing student more than 28 hours per week, this regulation, of course, could act to encourage students to work more than 28 hours in order to attain a higher rate of pay.

There are no regulations governing the number hours worked for those between 14 to 16, nor governing the time of day they may work on school nights.

However, Ontario does regulate the number of hours that full-time graduate students may work. According to Ministry of Colleges and Universities funding regulations (OMCU, 1991, p. 54), such a student must "not be regularly employed ... on other work or by the university for more than an average of ten hours per week for any term during which he or she is registered as a full-time graduate student." Whether such strict limits are justified and whether they, in fact, discourage the development of needed capabilities among Ontario's citizens, seems not to have been studied. Since foregone income is usually the greatest cost of postsecondary education (generally exceeding by several times the direct cost of government grants), the possibility that university students are discouraged from enrolling (or encouraged to drop out) ought not be overlooked. On the other hand, the government has an interest in protecting the public's investment, and funding students who are not serious about their studies is obviously a situation to be avoided. Nevertheless, it is curious that such regulations exist for Ontario's university students but not its high school students.

Suggestions for Further Research

Many of the studies reviewed included suggestions for further research. Greenberger and Steinberg (1980, p. 22) suggest further research should address the question, "Do different jobs yield different worker outcomes?" They indicate that "the planful design of jobs to promote youth development can not proceed rationally without such information" and that it also is important "to determine the effects of working in 'naturally occurring' jobs on youth from less advantaged family backgrounds" than the youth they studied. "It is possible, for example, that for such youngsters, the gains associated with employment are greater than those [we] uncovered."

Lillydahl (1990, p. 315) believes, "it would be desirable to know, particularly for non-college-bound students, if part-time jobs are providing students with general training, specific training, or no training at all. Does part-time employment reinforce things learned in school and/or lead to greater expected future income? Furthermore, we do not know the effect of various types of jobs on academic performance." As well, she indicates that "longitudinal data are needed in order to allow the sequential nature of the students'

decisions and outcomes to be studied. For example, current academic achievement may be partially determined by the number of working hours during the *previous* year. In addition, students' decisions concerning the number of hours to work and whether or not to attend college may depend in part on prior academic achievement. Understanding these relationships is extremely important because they relate to [a] ... country's future permanent labor force."

Stern *et al.* (1990, p. 383), although focussing on co-op programs, comments that "Determining whether co-op or other school-supervised jobs provide more features that contribute to students' long-run development than students can find in non-school-supervised jobs is important for measuring more accurately the economic and educational benefits of these school based programs." It follows, given that existing evidence support the notion that "natural" jobs do impart economic advantages, that we need to have a clear understanding of why this is so.

Meyer (1987, p. 145) reports that students from families of low SES work more hours than do other students, but "the process whereby family SES affects an adolescent's work commitment . . . is left unexplained."

Steinberg, *et al.* (1988, p. 24) comment that, "Although it does not appear that academically disenfranchised youngsters are disproportionately likely to hold jobs . . . , we are not sure whether student who are predisposed toward <u>becoming</u> disinterested in school are more likely to choose to work long hours." That also conclude that research is needed to "distinguish <u>among</u> work experiences. More important, research is clearly needed to illuminate the processes through which intensive employment may imperil school achievement" (p. 31).

Charner and Fraser (1987) call for research on 1) reasons students work, 2) work histories of students, 3) information on the dimensions of work, and 4) better information on the outcomes of student work. The latter, they suggest, should focus at least on the following: student self-concept; skills, knowledge, and abilities; satisfaction; time on activities; goals and plans; values and preferences; interactions; socialization; educational, career, and life attainments; and roles and responsibilities (p. 58).

Implications for Research and Policy

A synthesis of these recommendations for research and the findings of the literature review indicates four areas in which studies could be conducted that would inform policy makers about possible programs and regulatory actions that would benefit both youth and the country. These four, which are inter-related, are 1) the regulatory context of student employment in Canada, 2) the character, motivation, and behaviour of the intensive student worker, 3) opportunities and barriers for part-time work by at-risk students, and 4) the ability of schools to capitalize on the upon natural jobs as teaching and learning opportunities.

The key assumption underlying these four suggested areas for study is that one can intervene in the part-time student labour market with both regulations and programs in order to influence the behaviour of its members in a direction that is beneficial to Canada. In the first case, the level and type of regulation that would enhance the labour market objective of a well-trained labour force needs to be determined. Too little regulation might mean that youthful students, unaware of long-term costs, may undervalue their educational opportunities and place too little emphasis upon them. Stricter regulation might prevent this from occurring, while at the same time create a shortage of part-time student labour that could, potentially, be filled by "at risk" students who, apparently, tend not to be hired.

Answers to the second question, which concerns the nature of intensive student workers (over 20 hours of work per week), are critical to predicting the effects of any regulatory action. Inappropriate policies might upset both the labour market and the students. Some students might choose to drop out of school rather than suffer a reduction in hours of work; others might simply take a second job and hope that authorities did not find out. Employers might be deprived of a source of competent employees.

"At-risk" students, the focus of the third area for research, may have the most to gain from a part-time job in termsof developing employability skills. Whether or not limits on hours of work, which would restrict those students who already of jobs, would also create employment opportunities for "at risk" students needs to be determined. At present, such students are the least likely to be employed while enrolled in school or after leaving school

Finally, to create, through regulation, job opportunities for "at risk" youth without having

programs in place to assist them in learning the skills, knowledge, and values that are needed to obtain and jobs, is to invite failure. Knowing how to capitalize on natural jobs for learning both academic and practical knowledge would address this issue.

The potential implications of carrying out studies on the student labour market of the type indicated can be summarized in a series of hypotheses. These hypotheses, while consistent with the findings reported to date, need verification.

Hypotheses about the Student Labour Market

Hypothesis I. The hours of part-time work by high school students is not regulated in any province of Canada in a manner that is more restrictive than the law for hours of work for employees in general.

Rationale: There has not been extensive research on the topic of part-time work by students in Canada and no move to enact restrictive legislation was noted in the review of the literature. Even in the United States, where extensive work has been done, opinion is divided on matter and few jurisdictions have introduced regulations as yet.

Hypothesis II. If restrictions are placed on the number of hours per week that a student may work, fewer students will work more than maximum set by regulations (say 20 hours per week) than do before the regulations are adopted, all other things being equal.

Rationale: Regulatory controls, although not perfectly adhered to, do bring about change in behaviour if they are supported by community members. In this case, schools would have the power to enforce regulations on students, so general compliance would be expected. Some students, of course, might choose to become part-time students or leave school altogether rather than comply with the regulations. This possible response would have to monitored, but would, of course, tend to reinforce rather than contradict the hypothesis.

Hypothesis III. If restrictions are placed on the number of hours per week that a student may work, more students will be employed, including more from "at risk" groups, all other things being equal.

Rationale. Since, presumably, the amount of work in a community remains the same as before, more students would be hired to replace those who reduce their hours of work. Assuming that those most of the mainstream youth who wanted to work were already working, then employers would be forced to hire those that were not as employable; i.e., the at risk students.

Hypothesis IV. If restrictions are placed on the number of hours per week that a student may work, average marks of students will increase but absentee and dropout rates will decrease, all other things being equal.

Rationale: The research literature suggests there may be a cause-effect relationship between intensive work (over 20 hours per week), high absenteeism, low marks and, perhaps, dropping out. If so, then restricting hours of work should bring about increases in marks and a reduction in the absenteeism and dropping out. As well, some research suggests that moderate amounts of work may, in fact, help to keep youth in school by providing them a boost to their self-image, increased discretionary income, and a chance to apply their academic knowledge in real settings.

Hypothesis V. Some students who prefer working long hours will drop out of school, or apply for part-time status, if not allowed to work long hours.

Rationale: Restricting hours of work may dismay some youth who have contractual obligations to meet, such a car and insurance payments. Such individuals, according to the literature, are more likely to be from lower socio-economic groups, male, enrolled in general level courses, and earning lower marks. Such students are likely to be marginal to the school to begin with, and regulatory changes may force a choice between work and school. Becoming a part-time student may be a more attractive compromise to these individuals than continuing as full-time students and part-time workers.

Conclusion

The research on the effects part-time work on secondary schools student has definite implications for further study; indeed, the evidence is sufficiently strong to justify a large scale effort to verify the sets of relationship suggested in the five hypotheses stated above. Such a study might be conducted in several moderate size cities or a whole province.

Careful appraisal of the impact of new regulations would add greatly to our understanding not only of the part-time labour market (particularly the part-time youth labour market), but also the transition of youth from school to work and a clearer understanding of what individuals actually learn on the job.

In the long term, if the relations were verified, the Canadian economy would gain. More individuals would be working, thereby providing a more equal distribution of income; this outcome is important in the case of youth as it is with adults. Equally important, more "at-risk" students might gain the benefits that apparently accrue from working a moderate number of hours. This may enhance their lifetime employment. Complementing this benefit is the greater knowledge that mainstream youth would gain from devoting more time to school and working fewer hours, for the evidence suggests their school absentee rates would drop, their marks would increase marginally, and they would participate somewhat more in extra-curricular activities. Taken together, the quality of the work force would improve and, ultimately, Canada would enjoy a higher standard of living.

Table 1. Studies Relating Part-time Work to Academic Performance

Author(s)	Year	Sample & Design	Independent Variable	Dependent V. & Relationship (a)
Barton	1989	Cross-sectional National sample	Hrs. work/wk in 8 categories 26-30 to none	NAEP scores (b) *Weak negative*
D'Amico	1984	Longitudinal 5000 U.S. sample	Work/No work	Class rank *None*
Feenstra *et al.*	1975	Cross-sectional 4337 h.s. students in Grey Cty., Ont.	Hours worked per week	Perceived effect on marks *No relationship*
Green & Jaquess	1987	Cross-sectional 477 Gr. 11 acad. in one OK h.s.	Work/No work	Cum. GPA &ACT GPA - *No relationship* ACT - *Negative*
Hotchkiss	1982	Cross-sectional 714 Columbus, OH h.s. workers	Hours worked per year	GPA & est. GPA *None* (with controls incl. Gr. 9 GPA)
King *et al.*	1989	Cross-sectional 4620 Gr. 11 in 13 Ont. h.s.	Hours worked in 8 cat. (none to over 30)	Average mark *Curvilinear*
Lewin-Epstein	1981	Cross-sectional Sophomores-HSB Seniors-HSB (c)	Work/No work (Work = 1, No work = 0)	Cumulative GPA *No relationship* *Negative*
Lillydahl	1990	Cross-sectional 3000 national	Hrs. worked per week plus controls	GPA, SAT-V & M GPA - *Curvilinear* SAT - *No direct (indirect thru GPA)*
MacArthur *et al.*	1989	Cross-sectional 851 Gr. 11 in 3 Southern U.S. h.s.	Work/No work	GPA *Negative*
McNeil	1984	Cross-sectional 4 WI high schools	Work/No work	Cumulative GPA *Negative*
Meyer	1987	Cross-sectional 1897 WA state working students	Hours worked per week	*Negative*

Mortimer & Finch	1986	Longitudinal Gr. 10,11,12 males-YIT(d)	Worked/Never worked	Grade 9 GPA *Negative* (Selection)
			Years worked	Grade 12 GPA *Negative*
Parkin	1987	Cross-sectional 5100 in Grds. 11 & 12; Ottawa, Ont.	Hours worked per week	GPA; credits taken *None; negative*
			Weeknight vs. Weekend	*Negative*
Reese	1990	Cross-sectional One MO h.s.	High work/ Mod. work/ No work	GPA, ACT & MMAT *Positive*
Schill, McCartin & Meyer	1985	Cross-sectional 4587 WA st. h.s.	Work/No work	Cum. est. GPA *Small postive*
			Work/Mod. Work/No work	*Curvilinear*
Stacey	1985	Cross-sectional 148 Gr. 11, 1 Ont. h.s.	Hrs. worked per week in 5 cat. (none to over 30)	Term GPA *No relationship*
Steinberg *et al.*	1982	Longitudinal 531 Orange Cty. CA h.s. students	Worked/Never worked	Grade 9 GPA *No relationship* (Selection)
			Hrs. worked per week	*Negative*
Steinberg & Dornbusch	1990	Longitudinal 3989 in 9 h.s. (6 CA, 3 WI)	Hours work/wk in 5 categories over 20 to none	Est. GPA *Negative*
Wirtz *et al.*	1987	Cross-sectional 446 h.s. in fast food jobs	Work over 20 Work under 20	Est. GPA *Negative*

a. Totals for types of relationships: 2 positive, 8 none, 13 negative, and 3 curvilinear.
b. NAEP refers to National Assessment of Educational Progress (Barton, 1989)
c. HSB refers to the High School and Beyond Survey (Peng *et al.*, 1981)
d. YIT refers to the Youth in Transition Study (Bachman *et al.*, 1978).

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